that an effort was made by some of Nivelle's leading subordinates, including Petain, Franchet d'Esperey and Micheler to induce the Commander-in-Chief to abandon it altogether, and think out an effective alternative. It is interesting, and not without consolation to those who have been persistently accused of the crime of amateur strategy, that the first and only alternative that occurred to these eminent Generals was an offensive on the Italian Front. M. Painleve, who was then War Minister, has put it on record that Petain, Franchet d'Esperey and Micheler were "unanimous in saying that we did not attack, we must without delay send an army into the Italian Trentino." The reason why they did not press this offensive on the Government was that they had already committed the British Army to the Arras attack (in fact the British bombardment had already commenced). They could not then go back on their agreement with the British. It was too late now to reopen the question. Moreover they felt that French public opinion had for three months been led to expect great things from this offensive, and that the disappointment would be overwhelming if it were suddenly abandoned and the French attacking forces were whisked off to Italy.

French Generals suggest Italian offensive

It is a sad reflection that had the attack not been put off by difficulties, largely artificial, which genuine good-will would have dissolved, the Allied Armies would have caught the Germans in the act

of moving house" with all the traditional confusion attending that domestic migration. Long before the attack came the Germans had settled comfortably in their new quarters. Before the French attacked the enemy were fully apprised of the locality, direction and